
The Scarlett Fund

1 | Scarlett's Story

When Scarlett James was 6 years old, she was diagnosed with T cell lymphoma, a rare pediatric cancer. Her parents brought her to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), where she was cared for by a world-class team of pediatric oncologists, nurses, and child life specialists, and she received the most advanced treatments available. Today, Scarlett is thriving — she is now in eighth grade and enjoys horseback riding, art, and history.



Scarlett's experience inspired the James family to raise money for critical research so that children with cancer at MSK and beyond can have access to more effective treatments. In the spring of 2014, Scarlett invited friends and family to join her in Central Park for Kids Walk for MSK Kids, a fundraiser that gives 100% of donations to MSK Kids, the pediatric program at MSK. Since then, supporters of the Scarlett Fund have raised over \$3.4 million for pediatric cancer research through the MSK fundraising programs Fred's Team, Cycle for Survival, and Kids Walk for MSK Kids, in addition to organizing talent shows, galas, and other social events.

2 | The Scarlett Fund

Despite significant progress in combating childhood cancers, the primary treatment is still chemotherapy, which is harmful to not just cancer cells but healthy cells as well. This can lead to long-term side effects — an especially big problem for children, who are still growing. Precision medicine is a promising advance that can target and treat the specific genetic mutation that causes a person's cancer, reducing the potential for long-term damage. The Scarlett Fund supports the Pediatric Translational Medicine Program (PTMP) at MSK Kids. When researchers have the tools to help them identify the genes causing each child's cancer, they have a better chance of developing targeted therapies that can improve outcomes and have fewer side effects.

3 | Supporting Pediatric Precision Medicine

The PTMP offers every child cared for at MSK Kids comprehensive genomic profiling to search for changes in DNA that could influence cancer. This includes testing with MSK-IMPACT™, a tumor-sequencing technology invented at MSK that detects mutations in 505 genes known to play a role in cancer. This information helps doctors make treatment decisions for kids who need care today while also creating real-time, state-of-the-art research models to develop new ways to treat kids in the future. The PTMP is a top priority in MSK Kids' effort to revolutionize pediatric cancer care — and the Scarlett Fund's support is instrumental to this progress.

3 | Supporting Pediatric Precision Medicine (cont'd)

MSK Kids is on a promising path to sequencing the whole genome of every pediatric patient faster than ever before. In April 2018, it took 10 to 12 weeks to get results from genomic testing. Today, this analysis can be done in less than two weeks, and the goal is to further reduce that timeline to less than three days. This will ensure that children, teens, and young adults who are treated at MSK Kids are given the most effective therapies as soon as possible.



4 | How Donations Accelerate Progress

Nearly every cancer treatment available today is the result of a clinical trial, so investing in pediatric cancer research is key to discovering new and better treatment options, as well as making them available to young patients quickly.

Dr. Andrew Kung, a physician-scientist, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at MSK Kids, and Lila Acheson Wallace Chair for Pediatric Research, has a three-step plan to speed up the clinical trial process and deliver life-changing therapies to children with cancer. This plan, the Pediatric Fast-Track Program, aims to:

1. Lower the clinical trial eligibility age to 12 years old.
2. Move promising new adult therapies into pediatric clinical trials faster.
3. Give pediatric patients access to therapies originally created for adults.

Philanthropic support — like that provided by the Scarlett Fund — helps fund the Pediatric Fast-Track Program.

5 | Importance of Philanthropy for Pediatric Cancer

Pediatric cancers are the leading cause of death by disease in children under age 15 in the United States, but because they are considered rare, less than 8% of the federal cancer research budget is allocated to their study. Pharmaceutical companies are not incentivized to invest in discovering new treatments, and this has a direct impact on all areas of pediatric drug development — from basic research for target discovery to cancer treatment and care. Philanthropy is essential to filling this gap and provides much-needed resources to achieve progress in pediatric cancer treatment.

Thank you for supporting pediatric cancer research at MSK Kids through the Scarlett Fund. Your generosity is saving lives and improving outcomes for children with cancer — both today and in the future.



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

IT STARTS WITH

ONE

The word "ONE" is rendered in large, bold, black letters. Each letter is filled with a vibrant, abstract pattern of red, blue, and green, resembling a microscopic view of tissue or a complex network of fibers. The letters are set against a white background.



MAKING GOOD:

How Jennifer James Became a Fundraising Powerhouse

▲ “My endless gratitude for MSK Kids’ lifesaving treatment and care makes me want to give back as much as possible,” says Jennifer James (right), with daughter Scarlett, son Austin, and husband Robert. Photo credit: Sara Beth Turner

Jennifer James is a dedicated philanthropist who has hosted or participated in more than 50 fundraising events, inspired more than 11,000 donations from almost 7,000 donors, and raised \$3.1 million — all to support MSK Kids.

“After my daughter, Scarlett, was diagnosed with cancer, I was compelled to fund research that would improve treatments for children. I made a promise to myself that I would do whatever I could to help other families,” Jennifer says.

Scarlett was diagnosed with T cell lymphoma in 2013 when she was just 6 years old. She endured 25 months of difficult treatment — unable to return to school for two years. During a chemotherapy appointment, Jennifer saw a postcard for Kids Walk for MSK Kids, an annual fundraising event in Central Park.

“It had been seven months since Scarlett was diagnosed, and Kids Walk for MSK Kids would be the first opportunity people had to see her and support our family,” says Jennifer. “Most people really do want to support you. Sometimes they just don’t know how.”

Once Scarlett’s doctors, Peter Steinerherz and Neal Shukla, gave the green light for her to participate, Jennifer invited all of their friends and family to join.

The event helped light a spark in Jennifer. Knowing that philanthropy funded

much of the research that led to the chemotherapies that Scarlett needed, Jennifer wanted to fund the development of more-targeted treatments with fewer side effects. Pediatric cancer research is drastically underfunded, receiving less than 4 percent of federal cancer research dollars. To help close that gap, Jennifer created The Scarlett Fund. Mostly through grassroots efforts and small donations, The Scarlett Fund raised enough to seed the Pediatric Translational Medicine Program, now directed by Dr. Shukla. “The money that The Scarlett Fund raised is proof that one donation makes a difference,” Jennifer says. “It all adds up.”

While The Scarlett Fund raises money for research, it also raises awareness about the opportunities for everyone — especially kids — to get involved. “I try to empower children to make a difference,” Jennifer says. “If I help raise a community of young people who know about pediatric cancer, then hopefully they will become more involved as they grow up.”

Through The Scarlett Fund, young people around the country have organized

lemonade stands, talent shows, bake sales, and numerous greeting card drives that deliver supportive messages to kids with cancer. Today, Scarlett visits schools in New York City to educate students about pediatric cancer and also serves on the Kids Walk for MSK Kids Student Board. Because of her work, Scarlett received an inaugural American Girl Character Counts award. In addition to Kids Walk for MSK Kids, Jennifer participates in MSK’s Cycle for Survival, has run seven marathons with Fred’s Team, is Co-Chair of MSK’s Patient Family Advisory Council for Quality, and is a member of The Society of MSK.

In December 2019, the family received the ultimate good news: Scarlett was declared cancer free. After living with the diagnosis for six long years, Jennifer asked 13-year-old Scarlett if she wanted to take a break from her work with The Scarlett Fund.

Her response: “No, Mommy. I want to give more.”

To learn about the many options for supporting MSK through philanthropy, visit [Giving.MSKCC.org](https://giving.mskcc.org). •